

love is strange by orphan_account

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"Max?"

"Yeah?"

"Why do people kiss each other?"

Max was entirely caught off guard. She would have been no matter the situation they were in, but it didn't help that she had been thinking about kissing El right at that moment. "Uh..." she stammered, "what do you mean?"

"You know. Like Mike kisses me sometimes. Why?"

"Because...you love each other." She winced. That sounded so fucking dumb.

El didn't seem to care. She just looked kinda confused. "We do?"

Oh. Shit. She had kind of been expecting that, and in a way it made her happy, but at the same time...goddamnit. That wasn't supposed to happen. Well, she wasn't supposed to like girls if she was a girl herself, and look how that turned out. But at least she could hide it...or try. With El, though, she wasn't sure how much longer she could keep it up.

"Yeah. I mean, as far as I can tell."

That was a straight up fucking lie. Max knew that El didn't know what love even was, didn't feel about Mike in the same way. He was taking advantage of her and it made her really goddamn angry, but what could she do?

She could tell El the truth.

Max sighed. "El, do you know what a crush is like?"

"I don't know. I think that Mike has a crush on me."

And I do too, she thought grimly. "Yes, I think he does too. But do you

have a crush on him?"

"I told you I don't know what it feels like. I'm pretty sure that I love him. I know I would die for him."

"Would you die for the rest of us? Your friends?"

Without hesitating, she nodded. "Of course."

"So that's the friendship feeling. But with a crush, there's something more."

"What does it feel like?"

"It's like...it's like a little fluttering in your stomach. It makes you kind of nervous to be around the person, but- but also like you want to be with them as much as you can. For the rest of your life, even. And...well, you want to kiss them."

The brown-haired girl looked surprised. "*That's* what makes people want to kiss each other?"

"Well, yeah. I guess."

El stared at her for a couple seconds, making Max uncomfortable. "Uh, El? You okay?"

"Yeah," she said softly. "Yeah, I'm fine."

Then something happened that Max never would've expected in a million damn years. El leaned forward and brushed her lips against Max's.

Max could barely speak. "El. Are you- really? Are you sure?"

"I mean, what you described...I think I have a crush on you." She smiled so widely, so innocently, that it was impossible to resist.

"God. I- me too."

"Awesome!"

She's such a dork, Max laughed to herself. *And I love it*. Right now?

She didn't care what stupid Billy Hargrove or the rest of the fucking world thought. She was gonna kiss El all she wanted.

So their mouths met again. El's lips tasted like chapstick- the chapstick, Max realized, that Max had given her on her birthday. Her heart fluttered. That was just too goddamn adorable. She leaned into El, moving their lips against each other's, and the girl gave a little yelp. Max pulled back. "You okay?"

"Yeah," she said breathlessly. "Yeah, I'm fine. Better than ever, actually."

She smiled. "Good." And they were kissing again, for at least a minute, neither girl willing to stop. Max wasn't sure she would ever want to stop. Until the end of time, she would always love El.

It sounded hella cheesy, but it was true. "I love you," she whispered against El's mouth. Though her eyes were closed, she could feel El's smile.

"I...love you too," she said. Because now she knew what love was. They both did. Maybe it was strange, but it was goddamn beautiful.